

**EPI Update for Friday, November 21, 2008**  
**Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)**  
**Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)**

**Items for this week's EPI Update include:**

- **Keeping healthy during the holidays**
- **Healthy holiday recipes from Mayo Clinic**
- **Holiday cooking: Keeping it safe**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

**Keeping healthy during the holidays**

As the holidays draw near, remember to eat healthy and to incorporate physical activities into your holiday plans.

**Healthy holiday recipes from Mayo Clinic**

Mayo clinic and IDPH suggest that this year, instead of serving the old standbys — turkey smothered in gravy, candied yams, buttered corn and pumpkin pie — you try these healthier recipes for making the traditional holiday foods; they have all of the taste, but less fat, calories and sodium. Included are recipes for roasted turkey with balsamic brown sugar sauce or herb-rubbed turkey au jus, sweet potatoes and roasted bananas, green beans with red pepper and garlic, and for dessert, pumpkin-hazelnut tea cake. For these and more recipes, visit [www.mayoclinic.com/health/thanksgiving-recipes/NU00643](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/thanksgiving-recipes/NU00643)

**Holiday cooking: Keeping it safe**

Be sure to keep food safe by following basic food safety steps throughout the holiday season.

*Clean:* Wash hands and food-contact surfaces often. Bacteria can spread throughout the kitchen and get onto cutting boards, knives, sponges, and counter tops.

*Separate:* Don't cross-contaminate-don't let bacteria spread from one food product to another. This is especially true for raw meat, poultry and seafood. Keep these foods and their juices away from ready-to-eat foods.

*Cook:* Cook to proper temperatures. Foods are properly cooked when they are heated for a long enough time and at a high enough temperature to kill the harmful bacteria that cause food-borne illness.

*Chill:* Refrigerate promptly. This keeps most harmful bacteria from growing. Refrigerators should be set at 40 F and the freezer at 0 F.

*Thawing the Thanksgiving Turkey*

*In the refrigerator:* The safest method to thaw a turkey is in the refrigerator (40 F or below). Allow approximately 24 hours per four to five pounds of turkey.

*In cold water:* Submerge the securely wrapped turkey in cold water and change the water every 30 minutes. Allow about 30 minutes defrosting time per pound of turkey.

*In the microwave:* Microwave thawing is safe if the turkey is not too large. Check the manufacturer's instructions.

*Cooking*

While roasting your turkey is still the most popular option, the recommendations for roasting at 325 F are:

Without stuffing: 10 to 12 minutes per pound of turkey.

With Stuffing: 12 to 15 minutes per pound of turkey.

Use a food thermometer to check that the internal temperature of the turkey reaches 165 F throughout the bird, including the stuffing.

#### *Storing Leftovers*

Cut the turkey into small pieces; refrigerate stuffing and turkey separately in shallow containers within two hours of cooking. Use leftover turkey and stuffing within three to four days or freeze these foods. Reheat thoroughly to a temperature of 165 F or until hot and steaming.

#### **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

None

Because of the Thanksgiving holiday there will not be a Friday EPI Update next week.

#### **Have a healthy and happy Thanksgiving!**

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology

Iowa Department of Public Health

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